

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: Executive Order 13792 and the Carrizo Plain National Monument

Dear Secretary Zinke:

I am deeply troubled by the President's Executive Order 13792 that directs you to review Presidential designations or expansions of national monuments under the Antiquities Act made since January 1, 1996. As you review these designations, I strongly urge you to continue to preserve the Carrizo Plain's status as a national monument and keep its current boundaries intact. The establishment of the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM), in my district, has been beneficial to the Central Coast in California and has enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress. Any change in the boundaries or current management of the Carrizo Plain National Monument will be vigorously opposed.

As Secretary of the Interior, it is your solemn responsibility to promote stewardship and safeguard our public lands and waters. Our public lands are not only representative of our nation's heritage; they are also an essential asset to our local outdoor and tourism economy. In San Luis Obispo County alone, 1 out of every 8 jobs depend on travel and tourism. It is vital that we continue to guard our legacy of outdoor conservation for future generations of Americans to cherish and to continue to grow our economy.

In 1906, Congress vested the President of the United States with the unique authority to proclaim national monuments on federal lands in order to protect lands that have a significant natural, scientific, or cultural value. Since then, 16 Presidents—both Democratic and Republican—have declared a total of 157 national monuments, including the CPNM on January 17, 2001.

However, legislation to establish the Carrizo Plain as a national monument was first introduced by former Congresswoman Lois Capps in 1999. This proposal was supported by Republican Congressmen Bill Thomas of Bakersfield and Jerry Lewis of San Bernardino. Since then, the CPNM has enjoyed wide support in my district.

The CPNM regularly attracts thousands of people to the monument in bloom. It is the largest remaining vestige of Central Valley grassland—a once common ecosystem that has been

described as "California's Serengeti." Per estimates by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the CPNM draws around 1,500 visitors on a typical April, making it an essential asset for our local tourism economy. Though, this April, the CPNM made international headlines because of its spectacular "super bloom" of wildflowers and the BLM logged a record of 14,000 visitors for that month.

Recently, Visit San Luis Obispo County California reported that tourism accounted for \$1.59 billion of economic activity in 2016. Visitors spent about \$1.53 billion in 2016 in the county, which generated \$61.7 million in local tax revenues.

The CPNM has a long history of bipartisan support and it is an asset not only to my district, but to America as a whole. I once again urge you and the Department of the Interior to leave both the boundaries and the current management of the Carrizo Plain unchanged. Instead, let us work together to provide more resources and protection for the area.

Thank you for your consideration. Please keep me abreast of developments involved in the implementation of Executive Order 13792.

Sincerely,



SALUD CARBAJAL
Member of Congress